



## Supervisor Burke Looks Back on Year as Chair



As she left the presiding chair on the dais for incoming Chairman Don Knabe, Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke looked back on a year of trials and triumphs. The trials were monumental, with record state budget deficits threatening to crush County revenues and programs. County budget cuts drew public anger, most especially when Rancho Los Amigos, High Desert Hospital and 100 beds at Los Angeles County-U.S.C. Medical Center were placed under the axe. Rancho Los Amigos and the beds at Big County received judicial stays of execution, and County government faced a hemorrhaging of funds as a result. In addition, King-Drew Medical Center generated headlines with a loss of two strategic residencies – in surgery and radiology – due to accreditation problems, and four other residencies are at risk for the same reason. Supervisor Burke and the Board of Supervisors met the challenges, and had some triumphs.

With each Supervisor chairing the budget hearings of his or her assigned departments, as requested by the Chair, budget deliberations proceeded in a timely and reasonably orderly manner despite the crisis. In addition, Supervisor Burke looked back on other achievements.

**BURKE**

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## Employee of the Month Human Resources? Nancy Eiser

At the Board ceremony honoring her as the November 2003 County Employee of the Month, Director of Personnel Michael J. Henry thanked her for her contributions to the department, as well as the County and on her youthful nature in spite of the number of years she has served the County.

The Director of Personnel is correct. Nancy Eiser does not look like she has worked for the County for 32 years.

Currently a Human Resources Analyst IV with the Organizational and Employee Development Division of the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Nancy's responsibilities revolve around four programs: Clerical

**EOM**

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## EVENT CALENDAR

**Music Center**  
135 N. Grand Avenue  
(213) 628-2772  
[www.musiccenter.org](http://www.musiccenter.org)

**Ahmanson Theatre**  
Jan 9 – March 7, 2004 - Giacomo Puccini's *La Boheme*  
**Mark Taper Forum**  
Through Jan 25, 2004 – A New Musical

**Los Angeles County Museum of Art**  
5905 Wilshire Blvd.  
(323) 857-6000  
[www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org)

Dec 14 – Sept 6, 2004 – *nano*: A Media Arts and Science Exhibition

Dec 14 – April 4, 2004 – Erte/Opera & Ballets Russes/  
Dance: Theatre Costume in LACMA's Collection  
Through July 5, 2004 - Luxury Textiles East and West  
Part II: Dress and Identity

**Walt Disney Concert Hall**  
151 S. Grand Ave, Los Angeles  
(213) 972-3034  
[www.laphil.com](http://www.laphil.com)

Dec 18 - Special Holiday Program: Sing We Christmas

Dec 19 - Los Angeles Philharmonic: Beethoven

Dec 20 - 2:00 p.m. - Special Holiday Program: Glory!  
Glory! Glory! Gospel Christmas

Dec 20-21 - 8:00 p.m. - Los Angeles Philharmonic:  
Verdi, Busoni, Beethoven

Dec 23 - Special Holiday Program:  
A Merry Mancini Christmas

Dec 31 - Special Holiday Program:  
New Year's Eve - Pink Martini

Jan 8-11 - Los Angeles Philharmonic: Beethoven

Jan 16-18 - Los Angeles Philharmonic:  
Berlioz Bicentennial

Jan 22 & 25 - Los Angeles Philharmonic:  
Berlioz Bicentennial

Jan 29 - Feb 1 - Los Angeles Philharmonic:  
Berlioz Bicentennial

Feb 5-8 - Los Angeles Philharmonic:  
Mozart, Strauss, Schumann

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## Fireworks Spectacular Greet the New Year in Marina del Rey

A brilliant display of fireworks will light up the skies over Marina del Rey on Wednesday, December 31, to greet the Year 2004. Beginning at the 30-second countdown to midnight, the fireworks will continue into the opening minutes of the New Year.



Zambelli Fireworks Internationale, which started business in Italy more than 100 years ago, will create

**FIREWORKS**  
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**County DIGEST**

Articles and other submissions to the *County DIGEST* may be edited or otherwise altered for clarity.

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Available online at: [hr.co.la.ca.us](http://hr.co.la.ca.us)

## The Youth Public Education Campaign

The Youth Public Education Campaign, a collaborative effort between the Commission on Human Relations and the non-profit Rock the Vote organization, launched a cutting-edge anti-discrimination campaign targeting Los Angeles County’s 14 to 18-year-olds, in an effort to empower them to take action against discrimination and hate crimes.

This campaign takes aim at more than six million young people in the County of Los Angeles through a mixture of marketing, mass media and specially-developed programs, designed to appeal to this group of residents.

The focal point of the campaign is an interactive Web site, [www.zerohour.com](http://www.zerohour.com), designed to provide youth with the tools they need to combat intolerance and discrimination. Through quizzes, streaming videos and surveys, the user is encouraged to take personal initiative to seek ways to engage in hate violence prevention, and evolve from a passive bystander to an engaged, action-oriented individual.

The motivating tool leading to this fast-paced and visually appealing Web site is a series of cutting-edge television public service announcements – produced in the “reality” genre – which bring to life the absurdity of discrimination and the resulting hate violence. The campaign was funded by a generous seed grant from the Quality and Productivity Commission.

A Youth Advisory Council Team has been organized to help the Commission with outreach and education of the campaign. Composed of 20 members representing all areas of the County, this group ranges from the ages of 14 to 28. They represent different racial, gender, religious, sexual orientation and cultural groups in the County of Los Angeles.

Youth Advisory Council Team (ACT) members recently completed production of “Confessions of the Discriminated” CD, a collection of songs that members wrote as a result of a creative exploration of their own personal experiences with discrimination.

**YOUTH**

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## Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse Open to Serve the Public

The newly constructed Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse opened to serve the public on Monday, October 20.

Joining more than two hundred attendees at the October 16 dedication ceremony were state and local officials, including Superior Court Presiding Judge Robert A. Dukes, Judge Frank Jackson, Judge Steven Ogden, Assemblywoman Sharon Runner, Senator Pete Knight, Lancaster Mayor Frank Roberts, Palmdale Mayor Jim Ledford, District Attorney Steve Cooley, and Judge Howard Swart who served as the master of ceremonies.



*Supervisor Antonovich, wife Christine and children Michael Jr. and Mary Christine in front of the new Michael D. Antonovich Antelope Valley Courthouse.*

“This courthouse is a civic coming of age for this community,” District Attorney Cooley said. “This structure is worthy of the many dramas to be played out in it.”

**COURTHOUSE**

*continued on page 14*

# DECEMBER RETIREES

*Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 30 or more years of service to the people of the County of Los Angeles:*

- ASSESSOR:** Carolyn McPhan  
**CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES:** Cadance A. McClendon  
**CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES:** Courtanya Ferguson  
**COMMUNITY & SENIOR SERVICES:** John P. Coyle, Raymond L. Squaglia  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY:** Frank Lukus, Alan B. Tomich  
**FIRE:** Dennis Corbett, Robert Evans Jr., Jennie Frabotta, Terry W. Hart, Darrell D. Higuchi, Gregory B. Kidman, Gregory Lee, Donald Murray, Roger Sorenson, Norton Wisdom  
**HEALTH SERVICES:** Arthur Allen, Robin G. Allen, Martin L. Belcher III, Rubie C. Burton, Richard Bush, Edna L. Coleman, Carole R. Evans, Michele Y. Lewis, Anda M. Luters, Loraine A. McCarthy, Pauline Miller, Onofre Ordon, Cecilia Perona, Donna Redmond, Felton Robinson, Lynda G. Steele, Patricia Tidwell, Luisito T. Varias, Willie J. Wickliffe, Franzetta Williams  
**INTERNAL SERVICES:** Danny Montoya, Lynn C. Peltcher Jr.  
**MENTAL HEALTH:** Christine S. Torre  
**PROBATION:** Troy Amos, William A. Gerth, Frances R. Jenkins  
**PUBLIC DEFENDER:** Bobbie J. Anderson, William B. Saul  
**PUBLIC WORKS:** James J. Bellane, Thomas N. Brumm, Eddie S. Concepcion, Richard Delgado, David W. Lobato, Shirley L. Woodmore  
**SHERIFF:** Jerome Despues, Raymond Frazier, Corinne Gish, Jerry C. Kaono, Patrick J. Mallon, Terry D. Sonntag  
**SUPERIOR COURT:** Irene B. Puschman  
**TREASURER & TAX COLLECTOR:** Pete R. Juezan, Maureen Oster

*Congratulations to the following employees who are joining the ranks of the retired after 25 or more years of service to the people of the County of Los Angeles:*

- AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER/ WEIGHTS & MEASURES:** Carmelita C. Castro, Nancy S. Kellam  
**CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES:** Dorothy Byas, Gloria B. Wallick  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY:** Gloria Hinojosa, Edward E. Messinger  
**FIRE:** Ollie L. Linson, Jan Musial, Alfonso Saldana  
**HEALTH SERVICES:** Leslie B. Allen, Pasqui Ba, Olga Castillo, Leon Chakerian, Rosemary G. Guerrero, Lydia P. Juezan, Joyce G. King, Ernest Oms, Joan M. Reyes, Christine Riordan  
**INTERNAL SERVICES:** Cora A. Cooper  
**MENTAL HEALTH:** Charlene Bell, Presentacion D. Sagun  
**PROBATION:** Dennis Ortenburger, Lynn Scharnhorst  
**PUBLIC WORKS:** Lillian Coniglio  
**SHERIFF:** Michael L. Harroun, Dolores Hernandez, Mary K. King, Lloyd B. Teel, Paul D. Vechil, Virginia Weaver, James L. Wright  
**SUPERIOR COURT:** Donna C. Siebig

**EOM**  
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Certification Training Program, I-9 Basic Pilot Program, Employee Disaster Assistance Program and DHR's Emergency Response Team for the County's Emergency Operations Center.

"I find it a learning experience to interact with so many different facets of my job whether it's trying to resolve an issue in the classroom, advising a student on what course curriculum to take, working with faculty or administrators from the Los Angeles Unified School District or coordinating with County departments to schedule employees into a class or plan a graduation ceremony," she said.

Providing service excellence and customer service have been the hallmark of her career long before both were incorporated in the Countywide Strategic Plan. Having started as a Typist Clerk and progressed through seven departments, she is fully aware of what a job entails.

Her mantra of "wherever there is a need, I am willing to help in any way I can" is evident in her many volunteer efforts. Continuing her commitment to service, Nancy volunteers in fundraising efforts for and contributes monthly to a fund dedicated to a new church building in her local parish and has participated on numerous occasions in the Walk America March of Dimes and AIDS Walk Los Angeles. She also sponsors a child in the Philippines through Compassion International by providing her with life-changing benefits including help in education, health care, social skills development and Christian training.

On a personal note, Nancy Eiser enjoys spending time in the outdoors with her husband, Mark, and sons, Neil, a graduate of USC and Erik, a member of the Screen Actor's Guild who is pursuing an acting career.

Congratulations, Nancy, on a well-deserved accolade. You truly exemplify service excellence.

## Supervisor Molina Dedicates East Los Angeles' Largest Commercial Center in Over 20 Years

Supervisor Gloria Molina and the local community dedicated unincorporated East Los Angeles' largest commercial center in over 20 years at the grand opening of the East Los Angeles Civic Center Plaza on October 10.

Located within the County's Maravilla Redevelopment Project Area at 149 South Mednik Avenue, the \$8 million plaza is the first facility in the area to lure tenants such as the Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, Dairy Queen, Orange Julius, Quiznos Sandwiches, and Juan Pollo Rotisserie Chicken to unincorporated East Los Angeles. Additional tenants include State Senator Gloria Romero's district office, Linda's Bakery, Myra's 99-Cent, Rosie's Nails, Sparkleen Laundry, Tomic Insecticide, and the Water Store.

The 30,000 square foot plaza will create approximately 100 new jobs. In addition, it is the first completed development of the adjacent \$25 million East Los Angeles Civic Center expansion project. Another 4,000 square foot plaza addition is slated to open in April 2004 with targeted tenants including financial institutions, retail shops, and medical services.



Supervisor Molina explains the history behind the East Los Angeles Civic Center Plaza grand opening to a reporter from Univision's KMEX-TV Channel 34 news.

Over the past decade, Supervisor Molina has revitalized East Los Angeles by upgrading streets, improving County buildings, providing accessible transportation, initiating economic development programs and securing programs and services for families.

"This is a significant and momentous occasion in East Los Angeles history," Supervisor Molina said. "This plaza will provide increased access to business and retail services for the existing community and for many young people who have returned home to raise families, purchase real estate, and start new businesses. Those

individuals investing in East Los Angeles have recognized this community's potential and have joined in our belief that this is an outstanding place to do business. They have become a part of East Los Angeles' renaissance."

*Mariachis entertain the crowd at the East Los Angeles Civic Center Plaza grand opening.*



The family of Ron Mukai, head of plaza developer Mukai Maravilla LLC, has long-standing, deep roots in the community. The Mukai Family has owned the land upon which the plaza was built since the 1920s. Their life in East Los Angeles was interrupted when they were forced to relocate to an internment camp in the State of Wyoming during World War II but they returned immediately afterwards to their hometown.

"In the 1920s, my grandfather owned a general store," Mukai said. "Throughout the years we also owned the Belvedere Bottle Supply, an auto repair shop, a hot dog stand, and Tomic Insecticides. We never gave up on East Los Angeles. Even when we were told national tenants would never do business in East Los Angeles, we worked with Supervisor Molina to pursue our family's dream of developing this site."

The opening of the East Los Angeles Civic Center Plaza is the result of years of effort by Supervisor Molina's office, Mukai Maravilla, members of the redevelopment area's Community Advisory Committee, concerned residents of the East Los Angeles region, and the Community Development Commission (CDC). To bring the project to fruition, Supervisor Molina secured from the CDC \$1.6 million in redevelopment funds for land acquisition, off-site improvements and other project activities.

"These private and public groups jointly participated in many community meetings over several years to shape a development that addressed the needs of people that lived and worked there," CDC Executive Director Carlos Jackson said.

MOLINA

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## Supervisor Antonovich Tours County's One-Stop Fire Assistance Center with State and Federal Officials

On Friday, October 31, Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, then Governor Gray Davis, and Governor-Elect Arnold Schwarzenegger (*pictured*) toured the Claremont Local Assistance Center (LAC), a vital “one-stop” center for County of Los Angeles citizens impacted by the wildland fires.



Located at 1700 Danbury Road at the Hughes Community Center in Claremont, the “one-stop” facility will be open Mondays through Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and will be closed on Sundays. The hotline for recovery planning is (800) 980-4990.

“The County of Los Angeles is providing this vital “one-stop” center for our County citizens impacted by these devastating fires to access governmental assistance available to them and receive vital information about the recovery process,” Supervisor Antonovich said.

To further assist affected residents, the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich’s motion:

- Directing the Department of Public Works to prepare a disaster prevention program addressing potential flood conditions resulting from recent fires,
- calling for a report on whether current county fire resistance codes and policies including landscape buffers and fire-resistant construction can be expanded to prevent future fire damage and assist firefighting efforts,

- implement re-seeding efforts — ensuring a sufficient inventory of seeds on hand,
- ordering the immediate stockpiling of sandbags,
- calling for report back to the Board on the status of county dams and debris catch basins in hillside areas, and
- approving a measure to allow the Tax-Assessor to defer and/or reduce property taxes for those homeowners who suffered property loss.

Head of Homeland Security Tom Ridge (*pictured with Supervisor Antonovich below*) also visited the center, pledging support from President Bush and his administration in providing whatever help was necessary to assist the affected communities in recovering from the devastating fires.



“To minimize the negative impact and prevent future loss, we must mitigate the flood danger and prepare for future forest fires,” Supervisor Antonovich said.

Supervisor Antonovich initiated a \$50,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the wildfires in San Bernardino and Ventura Counties which made their way into the Claremont and Chatsworth areas. Anyone with information regarding suspicious activity around the origin of the fires may call We-Tip anonymously at (800) 472-7766.

Furthermore, Supervisor Antonovich warns donors who wish to contribute to fire disaster relief funds to be wary of what organizations they choose.



## Holiday Fire Prevention Tips from the Fire Department

Each year, fires occurring during the holiday season injure over 2,000 individuals and cause over \$500 million in damage in the United States. There are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

### Holiday Tree Fire Hazards

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

### Selecting a Tree for the Holiday

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needles should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

### Caring for Your Tree

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. Heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times. Consider using a potted tree.

### Disposing of Your Tree

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pickup service.

### Maintain Your Holiday Lights

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up.

Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory. If there is any question as to the integrity of your lights, replace them with a new set of lights.

### Do Not Overload Electrical Outlets

Follow the directions on the light sets when connecting your lights. Connect lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch. Do not leave holiday lights on while unattended.

### Use Only Nonflammable Decorations

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame retardant and placed away from heat vents.

### Never Put Wrapping Paper in a Fireplace

Wrapping paper can produce dangerous sparks and a chemical buildup in the home that could cause an explosion.



### Artificial Holiday Trees

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

### Avoid Using Lit Candles

If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

### Never Put Lit Candles on a Tree

Do not go near a holiday tree with an open flame – candles, lighters or matches.

### Keep your Kitchen Appliances Clean

Grease build-up can cause a stove fire.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level and in every room of your home. Test smoke detectors monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. Practice your home escape plan.

# ENRICHING LIVES...

## Firestorm 2003: On the Line and Behind the Scenes

As wildfires broke out across Southern California on October 21, news reports fanned out around the globe, depicting firefighters on the line. “Hot shot” teams of firefighters poured into the region over the 13-day period to contain the largest firestorm in California history. Nightly television news became a blur of yellow and orange, as camera crews chased flames whipping up canyons and barreling through neighborhoods like a solid wall of unstoppable destruction.

It was war. Tragically, 22 people, including Novato Firefighter Steven Rucker, perished in the flames. Some were overcome while trying to evacuate their own neighborhoods, some died inside their homes and some suffered heart attacks trying to grapple with the emergency. In all, 746,664 acres burned and 3,681 homes were destroyed from Santa Barbara south to the Mexican border. While Firefighter Rucker made the ultimate sacrifice trying to save homes in San Diego’s colossal Cedar Fire, another 240 firefighters were injured in the region.

While all of the split-second drama was happening on the front lines, many other members of the Los Angeles County Fire Department were also in “emergency mode” behind the scenes, supporting the incident command structure. Making sure that County firefighters and other agency responders providing mutual aid to the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Forestry had the equipment and supplies needed to battle these major wildland incidents, became their primary focus.



With wildland firefighting, attacking the rapidly spreading flames is a race against time. To help firefighters on the ground cutting dozer lines to encase the perimeter of the fire, water-dropping helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft are used. These machines become critically important whenever the fire comes too close to the urban interface — where homes meet the hillside brush areas within a matter of feet or yards.



In Firestorm 2003, County Fire incident commanders used all they could to attack the four major fires burning in its jurisdiction: the Simi Valley,

Piru, Verdale and Padua fires, for a total of almost 200,000 acres. In addition to the two 1,300-gallon capacity Super-scooper airplanes leased each fire season, the State of California paid for an additional two to assist. The County’s own helicopter fleet was kept in the skies over Los Angeles, thanks to the dedicated work of the Air Operations Section’s helicopter mechanic team, headed by Chief Helicopter Mechanic Mitch Gahie. “Our task was to keep the aircraft up,” Gahie said. “We successfully made over 500 water drops with no major problems. Our entire operation is a team effort, as safety and aviation go hand in hand.”

Driving into the Arroyo Vista Community Park in Wood Ranch just south of the 118 Freeway, the Simi Fire base, fences draped with banners from residents and schoolchildren were a visible display of gratitude. A banner from second graders at Wood Ranch Elementary School was layered with crayon drawings of their heroes in action and thankful messages. One read, “Thank you for being brave and helping us not get burned.” Another expressed a grander message, “Thank you for saving the Simi Valley. When I grow up I am going to be a firefighter,” signed seven-year-old Natalie.



As communities begin to heal and rebuild, the Los Angeles County Fire Department team regroups to prepare to respond to whatever lies ahead. Whether on the line or behind the scenes, their mission remains as proud protectors.

## Sheriff Baca Unveils “Cops Have Heroes, too - We Salute Our Firefighters” Bumper Sticker



Sheriff Lee Baca joined Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman and Los Angeles City Fire Assistant Chief John Ware in saluting the heroic efforts of the hundreds of firefighters who battled the worst fires to ravage the State of California in its recent history.

Sheriff Baca showed the Sheriff’s Department’s appreciation by unveiling a newly designed bumper sticker “Cops Have Heroes, too - We Salute Our Firefighters.” The bumper sticker will be placed on all department vehicles as an acknowledgment to the heroic deeds of our brothers and sisters in the fire service. Sheriff Baca, who placed the first bumper sticker on his department vehicle, said, “In spite of this terrible loss, it could have been worse. Your heroic efforts prevented further loss. Throughout California and neighboring states, you valiantly rose to the challenge and without regard for your personal safety, fought those fires.”

In addition to honoring the valiant efforts of the firefighters, Sheriff Baca recognized all Sheriff’s Department members for their tireless efforts in evacuating affected residents while, at the same time, making it possible for the firefighters to access the burning areas. Many lives



were saved through deputies’ persuasive efforts to convince hesitant or non-compliant residents to evacuate. Also in attendance at the event were several firefighters from City and County departments, as well as field deputies from the Sheriff’s Department.



## County of Los Angeles VISION

Our **purpose** is to improve the quality of life in Los Angeles County by providing responsive, efficient and high quality public services that promote the self-sufficiency, well-being and prosperity of individuals, families, businesses and communities.

Our **philosophy** of teamwork and collaboration is anchored in our shared values:

- ◆ responsiveness
- ◆ professionalism
- ◆ accountability
- ◆ compassion
- ◆ integrity
- ◆ commitment
- ◆ a can-do attitude
- ◆ respect for diversity

Our **position** as the premiere organization for those working in the public interest is established by:

- ◆ a capability to undertake programs that have public value
- ◆ an aspiration to be recognized through our achievements as the model for civic innovation
- ◆ a pledge to always work to earn the public trust

*“To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service”*



# HOLIDAY TIPS

## Smart Holiday Shopping Tips from the Department of Consumer Affairs

'Tis the season for shopping and gifts, a time when we give generously to charity and holiday spirit may overcome our usual caution. These tips will help you avoid post holiday problems and New Year budget blues.

Prepare a holiday budget and stick to it. Paying with cash can help keep you off the, "buy now, pay later" road to a debt filled New Year. If you must pay by credit card, use just one. It makes it easier to keep track of your spending.

Know a store's refund policy before you buy. Some stores offer a full refund, some offer store credit only, and some may offer no refund at all. Save all your receipts! You'll need them for returns or exchanges.

If an item is on sale, make sure you're charged the sale price, not more. When an item on sale is scanned, the regular price will be charged if the store has not changed the price in the scanner to the sale price. Check your receipt before you leave the cash register to ensure you're charged correctly.

Buying on the Internet? Make certain the Web site is secure before entering your personal or financial information. Keep in mind that paying by credit card gives you certain legal protections if you don't receive what you ordered, so it may be good to use in internet buying.

A contract is a legal document. Read it very carefully and don't sign it until you really understand it. Ask yourself if the interest rate is reasonable and what the total cost of the item is when interest is included. Then ask, "Can I afford it?"

Guard against identity theft! Do not write your address, phone number, social security or driver's license numbers on credit card receipts. Avoid giving personal information over the telephone or internet unless **you** initiated the contact.

Gift Certificates are popular and in California, most don't expire no matter what the fine print says. California law has prohibited expiration dates on most gift certificates since 1997. A gift certificate is also redeemable in cash for its cash value. Beginning January 1, 2004, nearly all service fees on retailer gift cards and gift certificates are banned.

Donating to charity? Charities and their agents can be bogus. Donate only to charities you know are reputable. Take your time before you give anyone money. Ask for identification and written information about the organization. Be wary of phone solicitors and those who come to your door unless you know them. Do not give your credit card number to people you don't know!



## Christmas Tree Recycling

It's as easy as one, two, tree. This year when the festivities end, have your Christmas tree recycled into compost, mulch, or ground cover to preserve our natural resources and reduce landfill waste.

1. Simply remove all items like ornaments, stand, water container, nails, and tinsel.
2. Visit [www.888CleanLA.com](http://www.888CleanLA.com) or call (888) CLEAN-LA, during working hours, to determine whether your community will have designated drop-off sites or curbside collection of trees (most common throughout the County of Los Angeles).
3. Recycle your Christmas tree during the designated time.

Happy Holidays  
from the  
Department of Public Works!





## Tips for Keeping Pets Safe this Holiday Season

The holiday season, a joy-filled time for many people, poses some risks for pets. Here are a few tips from the Department of Animal Care and Control to keep you and your pets safe during the holidays:

- Never feed or let pets eat chocolate or other holiday season candies. Chocolate is poisonous to dogs and cats and can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and even death. If you see or suspect your pet of eating chocolate, get him or her to a veterinarian right away for treatment.



- Shiny ornaments on Christmas trees can be particularly attractive to curious pets. Dogs and cats can suffer serious and even fatal injuries by chewing and swallowing pieces of tree ornaments. Make sure your pets cannot reach any ornaments in your home.
- Many people add special liquid preservatives to the water in Christmas tree stands. Some of these products are harmful to pets that may take a drink from the water. Be sure to ask if a Christmas tree preservative is “pet safe” before you buy it.
- Keep holiday season plants and flowers away from your pets. Many plants, such as Poinsettias, Christmas candles, English Holly, Christmas Berry, Christmas Rose and Mistletoe are poisonous to dogs and cats.
- Gift-wrappings can also pose risks to dogs and cats. Your pets may be tempted to chew on wrapping paper or ribbon, and these can be very harmful if swallowed. Also, don’t let your pets play in or around trash bags used to discard holiday wrappings.
- Electrical wiring can prove tempting for cats to play with and dogs to chew on. Your pet can suffer a

severe shock or even be electrocuted by coming into contact with the electrical current in the line. Make sure your pets cannot reach or climb onto areas that put wiring in their reach.

- Turkey is a particular favorite during the holiday season, but the bones easily splinter and should not be given to pets. Bone splinters can puncture an animal’s gastro-intestinal tract, causing serious internal injury, which could result in death.
- Keep your pets away from alcoholic drinks. The holiday season traditionally features a wide variety of specialty drinks such as eggnog. These are not good for family pets. Don’t let anyone offer a “sample” of your favorite libation to a pet.
- Remember, your pets during the holiday season. Be sure to pick out a new tag or other present for your pets. It makes them feel a part of the family, including them in the festivities and gives them something to do while family members are opening presents. Pet stores feature a wide variety of toys that are specially designed for your dogs and cat.

**The Department of Animal Care and Control wishes you and your pets a safe and happy holiday season!**

### FIREWORKS

*continued from page 2*

the Marina del Rey Fireworks Spectacular. The famous fireworks can be viewed throughout the Marina, however the best locations for viewing are Fisherman’s Village on Fiji Way, and Burton Chace Park at the west end of Mindanao Way. Parking is available in Los Angeles County lots throughout the Marina at \$2 for the evening.

The Marina del Rey Fireworks Spectacular is presented by Supervisor Don Knabe and the Department of Beaches and Harbors. All County employees are invited to include the Marina del Rey Fireworks as part of their New Year’s Eve celebration.

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**BURKE**

*continued from page 1*

In February, she introduced a motion to begin taking steps towards the County setting up its own official records retention and archiving program. The County is known to be a treasure trove of historical and other information. However, despite legal requirements by the state mandating that counties should maintain archives, much of this precious material is languishing in boxes that are stored wherever space may be found. "It's so important to have archives," Supervisor Burke said. "Having access to properly catalogued records will make the business of governing the County much more efficient."

Supervisor Burke is also proud of new changes in the way in which property tax bills are being administered, especially for the elderly. It came about after Terrell Dotson, an 85-year-old World War II veteran, had lost his Inglewood condominium because of an unpaid 1995 tax installment of \$546, due to a series of errors and mix-ups. Supervisor Burke joined forces with the community, and then with Treasurer-Tax Collector Mark Saladino, to get Mr. Dotson back into his condo – and, even more importantly, to change County procedures to identify elderly property owners who are at risk of losing their homes, so that preventive measures may be taken.

The Supervisor says her continuing events for foster children in her district, such as annual beach and fishing parties, are a joy as well as a provision of experience for children who have often never before been to parks or beaches. "The purpose of these events has always been to bring children to amenities where they have not been before, and to guide them so they know how to behave at the beach and in the park. It's very important for children to know that places like these exist."

In keeping with her special concerns for children, Supervisor Burke has also led the way to allocating an average of \$25 million a year, from funding through the state, to After School Enrichment Programs throughout the County, as well as in her district.

She was also instrumental in getting the County to utilize Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards, so that welfare recipients may use cards, instead of food stamps, to buy food. They also may use the cards to get cash at ATM

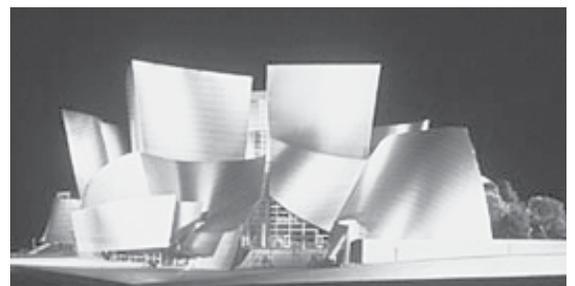
machines. The new program, which began in South Central Los Angeles as one of the pilot areas, has helped eliminate the stigma of using food stamps, decreased out-of-pocket costs for welfare clients, and resulted in substantial savings in the cost of these programs to taxpayers.

Her passion for the expansion of parklands in her district continues. She has had informal discussions to further expand the greenbelts along La Cienega Boulevard and La Brea Avenue. And the first indoor pool in her district, at Jesse Owens Park, got under construction earlier this year, and is due to be opened in the first quarter of 2004. A new Senior Center in Ladera Heights is also being planned.

Supervisor Burke also introduced a motion for a high-powered tax force, headed by former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher – and made up of medical education and administration experts – to make recommendations to strengthen and improve teaching programs and the delivery of health care at King-Drew Medical Center.

In mid-November, a freak storm dumped seven inches of rain, giant hailstones and snow on the South Central Los Angeles area in the span of a few hours, which resulted in the flooding of hundreds of homes and the closing of schools and clinics. Supervisor Burke declared a local emergency and allocated Community Development Block Grant funds for a one-stop help center. She also set up a center at the Florence-Firestone Center that provided nearly 9,000 people with food and supplies.

Last, but by no means least, Supervisor Burke welcomed the opening of Disney Hall. "This is an event that would make any year complete," Supervisor Burke said. "Disney Hall is magnificent, and has become an instant landmark."



## Mental Health Director Panelist at Harvard UCLA Forum



Marvin J. Southard, D.S.W., the director of the Department of Mental Health, was among a group of distinguished speakers at a special forum on mental health held November 12, at the UCLA campus. The forum was sponsored by the Harvard Interfaculty Program for

Health Systems Improvement, the Harvard School of Public Health, the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute, the UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine, and the UCLA School of Public Health.

Dr. Southard lectured on the effectiveness of integrated services for co-occurring disorders as exemplified by the success of the AB2034 program in general and the Village ISA in specific. The Village ISA, an innovative mental health program contracted with the County of Los Angeles, is located in the City of Long Beach.

The forum was moderated by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government Professor David Gergen, who is a journalist and former presidential advisor. Other speakers at the forum included California Assemblyman Darryl Steinberg; Howard Goldman, an advisor to the President's Commission on mental health; and other leading experts and scholars from UCLA and Harvard.

Catherine Bond, M.A., a member of the Board of Directors of the California Network of Mental Health Clients and the training coordinator for "Project Return: The Next Step," a program of the Mental Health Association in Los Angeles County, joined actress Carrie Fisher and two others to provide individual testimony at the forum.

The forum, the third in a series that the Harvard Forums on Health is co-sponsoring with partners nationally on health issues, showcased findings from a new national poll examining public attitudes toward chronic mental health conditions. In addition, it presented innovative mental health programs from California and around the country.

## Supervisor Yaroslavsky Announces Settlement of the MTA Strike

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (*lectern*), Chairman of the MTA Board of Directors, announced the settlement in the crippling transit strike that stranded more than 400,000 transit riders and inconvenienced hundreds of thousands of Southland commuters for 35 days from October 14-November 17. It was the third-longest transit strike the region had seen. Joining Supervisor Yaroslavsky around the lectern to announce the tentative agreement with striking mechanics, *from left*



*to right*, are fellow MTA Board members and Los Angeles City Councilmembers Antonio Villaraigosa and Martin Ludlow (*behind, conferring with mechanics' union president Neil Silver*); Councilmember Tom LaBonge (*behind Supervisor Yaroslavsky*); Supervisor Gloria Molina; Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich (*behind Supervisor Molina*); Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke; and Supervisor Don Knabe.

### Let's Roll

Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky (*left*) and MTA Deputy Director John Catoe catch an early bus ride down Santa Monica Boulevard in West Hollywood to welcome transit riders back on board on the morning after the settlement of the 35-day transit strike.



## ANTONOVICH

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“Beware of telephone callers and Internet scam artists soliciting donations for bogus charities and promising to help fire disaster victims,” Supervisor Antonovich said. “Do not be fooled — give to charities that you are familiar with and that are in the disaster related business, such as the American Red Cross, United Way, and Salvation Army.”

Check with the Los Angeles Police Commission at (213) 485-2102 or the Attorney General’s Office – Charity Registration at (916) 445-2021 to see if a company is registered. The Department of Consumer Affairs can be contacted at (213) 974-1452 or on the Web at <http://consumer-affairs.co.la.ca.us>.

## COURTHOUSE

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“It has been an 18-year birthing process. As with any birth there has been some pain and some joy, but the father of all this is Michael D. Antonovich,” Judge Dukes said. “The court is a star on the map of the Antelope Valley.”

The court building represents “the heart and soul and spirit of the Antelope Valley,” Supervisor Antonovich said.

Designed to accommodate both the north and south portions of the

Antelope Valley, the courthouse was built at 42011 Fourth Street West, midway between Sierra Highway and the Antelope Valley Freeway. The building adjoins Avenue M, the dividing line between the cities of Palmdale and Lancaster in northern Los Angeles County.

Serving the Antelope Valley community by adjudicating criminal, traffic, civil, and small claims cases, the courthouse has a jury assembly room, court clerk’s office, and 15 completed courtrooms with a future capacity of 21 courtrooms. The court’s state-of-the-art lockup facility

can accommodate up to 530 detainees. The total project cost \$109,000,000 and features more than 380,000 square feet of space with four stories above and one below ground.

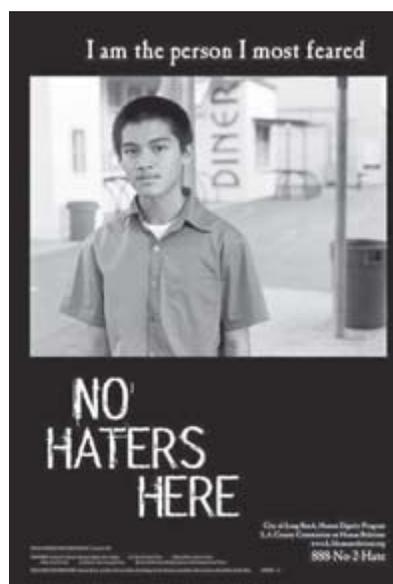
The facility replaced the rapidly deteriorating, 40-year-old Lancaster courthouse, which has long since worn out its ability to handle the caseload of the booming Antelope Valley population. The old courthouse will be converted to a modernized juvenile court in 2004.

## YOUTH

*continued from page 3*

“After 9/11 my best friend told me that I was a terrorist, and I was made to feel very unwelcome at my school, by both students and teachers,” says Farah, a current member of Youth ACT, and an organizer of a school-wide peace rally that helped bring Muslim and non-Muslim students together.

Chavonne Taylor, an 18-year-old El Camino College freshman, joined Youth ACT as a high school senior



because of its dedication to achieving results. “Youth ACT was a group that didn’t just complain about the problems in Los Angeles, but also sought to change them by informing youth of the effects of discrimination in its many forms.”

For further information on the Youth ACT program and its members, readers may contact the program’s coordinator, Cherylynn Hoff, Senior Intergroup Relations Specialist, at the Commission on Human Relations, by phone (213) 974-7629 or e-mail, [choff@hrc.co.la.ca.us](mailto:choff@hrc.co.la.ca.us).

## Supervisor Knabe Works to Create Community Emergency Response Teams for Better Homeland Security

The combined port complex of Los Angeles and Long Beach is one of the largest possible targets for a terrorist attack in the country. A major incident at the port complex could severely weaken the national economy and cripple the economy of the County of Los Angeles.



*Supervisor Knabe joins public safety officials during a Community Emergency Response Teams training exhibition.*

In the event of a terrorist attack, units from the Los Angeles Port Police, Port of Long Beach Harbor Patrol, Los Angeles Fire Department, Long Beach Fire Department, and Coast Guard are likely to be the first emergency responders on scene. In addition, civilians may need to both care for themselves and help others until help arrives. The Department of Homeland Security and FEMA have recently nationalized a civilian volunteer training program known as CERT: Community Emergency Response Teams. The program, originally created by the Los Angeles Fire

Department in 1985, is designed to create a well-trained civilian emergency work force to assist emergency personnel during disaster situations.

The County of Los Angeles has recently received federal funding for Community Emergency Response Teams as part of the nationwide Homeland Security effort to help communities become safer, stronger and better prepared for preventing and handling terrorism, crime and natural disasters. The County will receive \$202,000 for CERT training and \$1.4 million for Emergency Operations Planning updates.

“CERT training is an integral part of our strategy to quickly and effectively respond to terrorist attacks and major disasters throughout the County of Los Angeles,” said Supervisor Knabe, who is a White House appointee to the State and Local Officials Senior Advisory Committee to the President’s Homeland Security Advisory Council. “The presence of well trained Community Emergency Response Teams at strategic targets like the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles will greatly enhance our ability to respond in an emergency.”

The ability of a community to effectively recover from the devastating effects of a natural disaster or terrorist attack requires the active participation, planning, and cooperation of all levels of the population. The County of Los Angeles is working hard to facilitate that preparedness and has set a goal of providing CERT training to 100,000 residents in high-risk areas such as the port complex within the next 10 years.

**MOLINA**  
continued from page 5

“I am glad that other businesses are recognizing our community’s purchasing potential and I encourage more proprietors to consider East Los Angeles for business

opportunities,” East Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce President Eddie Torres added.

Those who are interested in obtaining additional leasing space at the East Los Angeles Civic Center Plaza should contact Ron Mukai at (323) 269-1987.

***“To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service”***



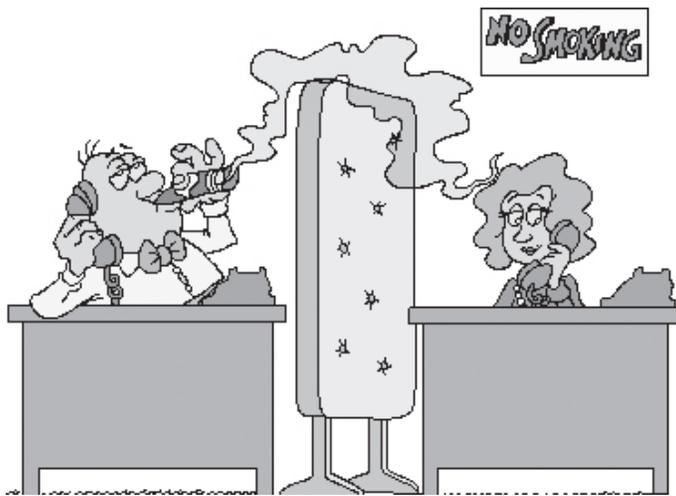
# Share It



## New Smoking Law Goes into Effect

On January 1, 2004, a new law affecting public buildings will take effect. AB 846 (Vargas) was signed by former Governor Davis and amends Sections 7596-7598 of the Government Code.

The new law prohibits smoking within **20 feet** of main entrances, exits, and operable windows of any building owned, leased, and occupied by the state, county, or city, and buildings of the University of California (UC), California State University (CSU), and California community colleges. The previous law (Government Code 19994.30) prohibited smoking within five feet of the doorways of buildings owned, occupied, or leased and occupied by state government agencies only, excluding UC, CSU, and community colleges.



The bill was signed to further protect Californians from secondhand smoke (SHS) exposure. SHS is estimated to cause approximately 4,700 deaths each year in California, including deaths from lung cancer and heart disease. It has also been shown to be responsible for asthma, eye irritation, and respiratory problems in nonsmokers.

For further questions, contact the Tobacco Control and Prevention Program at (213) 351-7341.

The  
County  
of Los Angeles  
Wishes You and Your  
Family a Safe and  
Happy Holiday Season!



### Members of the Board

**Don Knabe**  
Chairman  
Fourth District

**Gloria Molina**  
First District

**Yvonne Brathwaite Burke**  
Second District

**Zev Yaroslavsky**  
Third District

**Michael D. Antonovich**  
Fifth District

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**Michael J. Henry**  
Director of Personnel

**Sandra Wallace Blaydow**  
Ombudsman/Community Liaison

**Martina Abgaryan**  
Editor

